342 floor, resting his feet outside on the ground. An overhanging roof protects him from the rain. Larger houses have an entrance hall and a porch running along the front. Since these porches also have sliding door panels, few people bother to use the entrance except on formal visits.

The simple structures have a framework which is basically the same [335] as that of the more complex ones. Neither is constructed with nails but held together by mortise and tenon joints. Thick layers of thatch or a tile roof give adequate protection from rains. Thatch roofs need re- [356] placement every few years, but they keep the house cooler than the more permanent, more expensive clay or cement tile roofs. House walls are made of very thin, cheap wood which weathers fast and cracks, allowing winds to enter freely. Only the new houses have solid double walls. The floor in the simple buildings consists of planks which in many houses are not nailed down; during the winter months the cold penetrates through the wide slots between the boards. Better houses have ceilings and doors to separate the "first" and "second" room in the front of the house, as well as solid floors.

Smoke from the open fireplace in the kitchen rises into the roof and [151] seeps through the thatch. Poor eyesight, common among children, is believed by the villagers to result from smoke-filled houses and poor lighting. In the evening, dim light is provided by one or two kerosene lamps.

342 The ancestral shrine, a built-in shelf for the ancestral tablets, has
353 its place in the "second" room. This shrine is only found in the homes
769 of oldest sons. It is not treated with special reverence. Photographs of the deceased as well as of living relatives are kept there as well as personal belongings—a letter, money, a bottle of sake, or gifts. During [822] religious holidays of ancestral worship, red hibiscus flowers, the color for the dead, are placed on the shelf. Since the shelf is high from the floor, small children cannot get at it.

352 The only furniture in all houses is a low table on which food and
[516] drinks are served. Everybody sits on the floor, legs crossed and feet tucked under their thighs in the case of men or put behind to one side in the case of women. Very few houses in Taira have the thick, padded straw mats found in the homes of more well-to-do people in Okinawa. But every family has several thin mats of woven reed standing in one corner of the room; these are spread out for guests to sit on or for a member of the household who lies down during the day. Storage
353 shelves are used in simple houses, but in the better houses mattresses, comforters, and hard pillows are kept in a built-in closet space during
[356] the day. On sunny days women air the bedding by spreading it over walls, fences, or in the grass.

2:Maretzki & Maretzki B-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

There are no uniform sleeping arrangements. The larger the family, the more corners of the front rooms and rear room are occupied. Since the number of comforters is limited in most families, two or three members of the family share one. Father and mother do not always sleep together, and, even if they do, an infant may sleep between them. When there are several children, another child may sleep next to the father, so that in one row there may be mother, a baby, father, and an older child. One or two children usually sleep with the grandmother in another corner. In several families an older sister may sleep with younger brothers; in others, two elder brothers, or an older sister and an older brother, may sleep next to each other. Children do not usually sleep at other people's houses, but when they reach junior high school age, a girl may stay with a girl friend or a group of boys may sleep together at one house. 513

A simple desk and chair are kept in each house where children go to school. These are put in one corner of the front room, except in large houses with a third room in front, which is reserved for schoolchildren of the house, who also sleep there. Around the study corner, books are kept on a crate or shelf. Only the biggest houses have a niche in their "first" room. Paintings and scrolls, used to decorate alcoves before the war, have been lost, and few people have acquired replacements. Many families decorate rooms by pasting pictures from magazines and newspapers on the walls. Some have reproductions of the Japanese Crown Prince Akihito, others scenic pictures from Japan. 352 353

Only a few recent buildings have inner sliding doors with paper screens. The paper is often left off during the hot season and put on before New Year. If children or cats are around, the splendor does not last long, and even an adult's hand frequently punctures the screen in trying to open the door. Holes are left unrepaired for the remainder of the year. 342 356

The eating corner between kitchen and rear room is the place where most families gather in the evening, especially during the winter. An informal caller may join them there. If it is cold, a brazier is put in the center, filled with pieces of charcoal on top of old ashes to provide heat for those sitting around it. These braziers vary in type: the poorest families use the bottom of an oil drum filled with ashes; others use pottery jars or small wooden boxes lined with metal. 342 264 354

Crockery used in most houses is of a simple type. If breakage occurs, as it often does, a cup or bowl can be replaced for a few yen at the grocery store. Well-to-do families may have an extra set of teacups, which are used for guests. Several families also own lacquer ware, but it is not in daily use. Like cups and bowls, chopsticks are simple and inexpensive. They last a long time and are seldom lost. Children do 415 [412]

415 857 not use household equipment in their games. Instead they find broken dishes, old cans, and other discarded items in the trash heap. Children do

354 [776] [654] The kitchen has no equipment other than the open fireplace with three hearth stones and a shelf above it on which a salt column, symbolizing kitchen deities, is kept. During the last few years, the Ryukyan government Home Extension Service has been trying to introduce brick stoves into farmhouses. Several families now have this kind of stove although it is expensive to build.

356 As far as can be superficially discerned, the home is kept clean. A visitor usually finds the floor of the house free of dirt. Footgear is taken off before entering, and children are reminded to wash their bare feet before going into the house. Less care is given to the area around the kitchen.

312 415 Outside the kitchen stand one or two jars to store water. A dipper is kept nearby, and children playing in the vicinity or adults often walk to one of these jars for water, which they drink out of a dipper. There may also be an array of pots, pans, crates, baskets, and other equipment piled up around the kitchen. Knives and hatchets are openly left around among the equipment behind the kitchen.

351 [231] [514] [364] The courtyard is an important place for domestic activities. Here women and girls wash dishes, mix pig food in large kettles, make bean paste in a hand stone grinder, and prepare grain for storage. There are vegetable patches in one corner of the yard, chicken coops, pigsties, goat pens, and an outhouse in another. Most garbage is fed to the pigs; the rest is thrown over the sea wall to roll down onto the beach.

* * *

Chapter 2

Daily Routine

805 512 There are few clocks in central Taira. Except for the township office, post office, and village store, only two or three families own a timepiece. Twice a day, at noon and 10 o'clock in the evening, a clerk strikes

751
514 The drum is nearly full and its surface is in constant motion, a seething
343 mass of maggots. One of those men with the carts that cause you to cross
[364] to the other side of the road will come in a few days to dump it, he hopes.
574 He crosses the yard and is invited into the house. He takes off his shoes
751 and steps up onto the floor. It is surprisingly clean, he finds. A mat is
[356] spread and he sits cross-legged upon it. Tea is offered and he accepts,
thinking that it must have been made from boiled water. He learns later
that he was wrong. He is given a fan and perceives that its function is
keeping the flies away as much as it is creating a breeze. In a spirit of
friendly cooperation he and Grandfather take turns shooing the flies off
the broken chunks of black sugar that have been placed before them. A
larger blue-bottle fly enters and someone makes a special effort to chase
[825] it out. Should the visitor be so crude and impolite as to mention flies
and in connection with the toilet, it will be pointed out that only the
blue-bottle flies are hatched from the maggots in the toilet. The smaller
black house-flies simply produce more flies and hence are harmless.

[264] Bananas are served and the peels follow those of the potatoes out
onto the ground. Smaller children run in and out. One child comes in with
[515] its nose running. After a time Mother pulls up its shirt tail and wipes the
[757] mucus off the upper lip. The child has not been well; Mother or Grandmother
may take it to the yabuu, who will burn moxa on its skin at the proper
places. A neighbor's child walks by; its face and nearly hairless head are
[753] a mass of scabs and its eyes are almost shut by pus. Someone laughingly
explains that this is what happens when you don't cut a baby's buttocks
properly with a razor to draw out the bad blood.

The visitor is urged to take more tea and sugar. He is complimented on his interest in Okinawa and is asked innumerable questions about America. The family is eager for knowledge and for further contact. As he rises to leave, he is urged to return. He puts on his shoes, finding one slightly
[753] damp from the poor aim of the youngest child. He is cautioned to wear his
hat and knows by now the unspoken fear---encephalitis---caused by too much
[296] exposure to the sun. He notices that around the well where Mother has been
doing laundry a great pool of water is gradually sinking into the sand.
As he picks his way across the yard he wonders if the family would not be
better off living in a houseboat, preferably in a fast-moving stream.

751 Such are some of the features of Okinawan life. Yet it would be a
mistake to assume that there are no standards of sanitation. There are; they
356 are simply narrower than those of most Americans. Many Okinawans do throw
751 garbage out their front doors as indicated above, but it is also true that
the floor of the house is usually cleaner than many American floors. It has
to be clean; people sit on it and sleep on it. People take off their shoes
before stepping up onto it or if they have been to the fields barefooted
751 they may wash their feet before stepping up onto it. But the area of clean-
[351] liness ends with the step. Beyond the step is a different sort of territory.
[514] Yet even in the yard there is a limit to the amount of trash that may be al-
lowed to accumulate before it is swept away. The practice of urinating in
the yard is distasteful to the American observer, but there is perhaps less
basis for objection to it as a health hazard. Urine is relatively harmless.
Feces, however, go into the toilet. If an untrained child defecates in the
yard usually someone cleans up the spot.